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By David Bedard

176th Wing Public Affairs

Alaska Air Guardsmen brief Air Combat Command officials

JOINT BASE ELMENDORF-RICHARDSON, Alaska — Alaska Air National Guardsmen briefed Air Combat Command senior officers during a Feb. 12, 2019, tour of 176th Wing rescue units at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson.

ACC is the primary provider of air combat forces for the Air Force and is located at Joint Base Langley-Eustis, Virginia.

Representing ACC was Air Force Maj. Gen. Kevin Huyck, director of operations; Maj. Gen. Scott Pleus, director of plans, programs and requirements; and Brig. Gen. Aaron Prupas, director of intelligence.

Alaska Air National Guard Brig. Gen. Darrin Slaten, 176th Wing commander, said he and his leadership advocated for ongoing improvements to the wing's HC-130J Combat King II and HH-60G Pave Hawk fleets.

"We were happy to host ACC's leadership from A3, A5 and A2 to discuss requirements in the Arctic," Slaten said. "Specifically, we talked about the ongoing challenges with the modernization and conversion of the HC-130J and the HH-60G."

The Combat King II, the Air Force's only dedicated fixed-wing personnel recovery platform, replaced older 211th Rescue Squadron HC-130N aircraft in 2017.

The HH-60G originally entered service in the early 1980s and is scheduled to be replaced in the 210th Rescue Squadron by the HH-60W Pave Hawk II in the coming decades.

Slaten, a Pave Hawk pilot, told the ACC officers it is becoming more difficult to source replacement parts because the G-model is based on the Army's older UH-60L, which has largely been replaced by the Army's M-model. Consequently, there are fewer parts in circulation.

The ACC generals also visited the warm storage facility for the wing's Arctic Sustainment Package, which is a rapidly deployable air-droppable package, including combat rescue officers and pararescuemen, that can provide shelter, heat, transportation, fuel and food for 28 people for up to six and a half days in extreme Arctic conditions.

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Airmen representing several wing units and career fields designed, resourced and built the ASP. Aircrew Flight Equipment Airmen said they put in extra time to ensure the ASP is always ready to deploy at short notice.

During the ACC visit to the 212th Rescue Squadron, combat rescue officers and pararescuemen briefed the generals on the benefits of having health and fitness professionals embedded in the unit as part of Special Operations Command's Preservation of the Force and Family initiative. Pleus said he agreed the cost of employing the professionals was negligible when weighed against increased unit readiness and the cost savings associated with preventing acute injuries and chronic conditions that can lead to disability compensation.

Airmen of 212th Rescue Squadron talked about several search-and-rescue missions they carried out across Alaska, which demonstrated the unique challenges of operating across the vast distances of the state while combatting inclement weather.

Slaten highlighted a 2006 mission rescuing 23 crewman from the Singapore-flagged Cougar Ace cargo vessel that had severely listed to one side. HH-60G crewmen and pararescue flew more than 1,000 miles over ocean waters to execute

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PHOTOS

DVIDS link: <https://www.dvidshub.net/news/310641/alaska-air-guardsmen-brief-air-combat-command-officials>



Alaska Air National Guard Brig. Gen. Darrin Slaten, 176th Wing commander, speaks with Air Force Maj. Gen. Scott Pleus, Air Combat Command Plans, Programs and Requirements director, during a Feb. 12, 2019, visit of senior ACC officers to Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska. ACC is the primary provider of air combat forces for the Air Force and is located at Joint Base Langley-Eustis, Va. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by David Bedard/Released)



Alaska Air National Guard Maj. Brock Roden, 212th Rescue Squadron combat rescue officer, speaks with senior officers from Air Combat Command during their Feb. 12, 2019, visit to Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska. Airmen of the 176th Wing are responsible for civil search-and-rescue support of mainland Alaska as well as combat search and rescue in their federal capacity. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by David Bedard/Released)



Senior officers from Air Combat Command tour a 210th Rescue Squadron HH-60G Pave Hawk during their Feb. 12, 2019, visit to Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska. The HH-60G is the Air Force's combat search and rescue platform. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by David Bedard/Released)